



eNews from Sen. Lisa Murkowski - September 21 , 2007 - Vol. 3, Issue 13

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Senator Murkowski Champions American Indian and Alaska Native Women's Safety

I co-chaired a Senate Indian Affairs Committee hearing on violence against Indian women. The hearing was partly in response to the Amnesty International Report "Maze of Injustice: The Failure to Protect Indigenous Women from Sexual Violence in the USA."

Alaska ranks first in incidences of rape in the United States, and Alaska Native women experience a disproportionately higher percentage of sexual violence than the population as a whole. Alaska's vast geography further complicates the problem; at least one-third of Alaska Native villages that are inaccessible by road have no law enforcement presence.

I am greatly troubled that American Indian and Alaska Natives face such unacceptably high levels of domestic violence and sexual assault. Yet I am inspired by their strength and courage. We owe it to these women to correct the shortcomings contributing to this problem, such as a lack of law enforcement and inadequacies in the Indian Health Service's forensic process.



Senator Murkowski speaks with volunteers at Alaska Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC).

AWAIC is committed to ending domestic violence in our communities.

Visit www.awaic.org to learn more about this valuable resource

Senator Murkowski Denounces President Bush's Veto of SCHIP Legislation

In the ten years since its inception, the Children's Health Insurance Program has helped millions of kids. The bill that the House and Senate passed will give millions of additional children the chance to see a doctor, and have access to life-saving medications and receive basic medical care. I am disappointed that the President has vetoed this bi-partisan legislation, and I will vote to override that veto if given the chance.

Senator Murkowski Welcomes Funding for Heating Assistance in Alaska

I am pleased that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has released \$1.7 million to Alaska for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). This nationwide program is designed to help low-income families and senior citizens pay home energy costs. This year's allocation represents a \$320,000 increase over the total funding distributed to Alaska last year.

The cost of energy is having a detrimental impact across the State, particularly in rural areas. This increase to LIHEAP will help the state provide assistance to more Alaskans during the critical winter months; however, I recognize we must find a more secure, long-term solution to this problem. I will continue to promote increasing energy supplies throughout the state through traditional and renewable sources.

In Alaska, LIHEAP is administered through the State Department of Health and Social Services. Additional information can be found by calling 1-888-804-6330 or visiting <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/hap/>

Senator Murkowski Joins Bipartisan Group of Senators in Addressing NSL Abuses

I joined with a bipartisan group of senators in introducing legislation to address the serious misuse of the FBI's national security letter (NSL) authorities. In an effort to continue protecting the civil liberties of all Americans, Senators Russ Feingold (D-WI), John Sununu (R-NH), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Ken Salazar (D-CO), Chuck Hagel (R-NE) and I introduced the National Security Letter Reform Act to correct the misuses and Constitutional concerns surrounding the use of NSLs. The bill we offered provides new statutory safeguards that allow the FBI to continue investigating terrorists and spies but also protect Americans' personal information.

We all agree that going after suspected terrorists needs to be a top priority, but we shouldn't violate the privacy of law-abiding Americans. The FBI's abuse of its national security letter authorities uncovered by the Department of Justice Inspector General was disappointing and disturbing. The unchecked authority of the executive branch to

use NSLs to obtain information about innocent people without judicial review is part of what led to these abuses. The American people deserve better. Congress needs to put appropriate limits on these authorities -- limits that allow the government to actively investigate suspected terrorists and spies while also protecting the privacy of innocent Americans.

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Senator Murkowski Condemns the Persecution of Burmese Protestors

I was pleased to join with the other members of the Senate Women's Caucus on Burma in expressing our solidarity with the protestors in Burma and calling on the international community to place greater pressure on the military junta to restore democracy in the nation. It really is important that those countries with the closest ties to Burma – China, India, Russia, Japan, and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations – make clear their rejection of violence and their support for a peaceful political process.

With this latest uprising, and its subsequent repression, we see yet again that many of the largest investors in Burma are unwilling to go beyond words of condemnation and urging restraint.

Certainly, regional stability is an absolute necessity when considering what the future for Burma holds. There is a difficult balancing act for Burma's neighbors to carry out. It is our responsibility to engage with the international community to try and find that balance – to find that right mix of sanctions and interaction.

The people of Burma have for too long paid the price of tyranny and oppression. We must keep up international pressure until real progress is made towards the cause of freedom and democracy.

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Senator Murkowski's October Recess Schedule

Next week, I will be traveling throughout Alaska during the upcoming October Recess. During my visit, I will be in southeast to meet with Alaska fishermen, visit schools, and hold public meet and greet receptions in Wrangell, Petersburg, Ketchikan, Craig, and Metlakatla.

In addition, I will be in south-central Alaska where I will be attending a health fair at the Mat-Su Regional Hospital and make remarks to the Anchorage Chamber.

For a list of my public events click [here](#).



Senator Murkowski recently met with Alaskan volunteers for the American Cancer Society to discuss cancer research.

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